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Catalano honored as Senior Security Specialist

by Grace Janiszewski, Sensors Directorate

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — When Kathy Catalano began her government service career 25 years ago as a clerk typist, she never dreamed that she would be honored as Senior Level Security Specialist of the Year for Wright Patterson. Catalano, honored at an Oct. 25 awards luncheon, remembers struggling just to learn the military structure.

“In the early years, I was fascinated in how we protected critical data, while pushing technological advances to the warfighter,” Catalano stated. “Many times it was necessary not to look at just regulations, but to determine how a decision affects the mission. Maintaining the proper balance is always a challenge.”

Today, as chief, Security Office, Air Force Research Laboratory’s Sensors Directorate, Catalano is responsible for force protection of the 1,000 personnel in the directorate, and ensures all areas of the security program are adequately staffed.

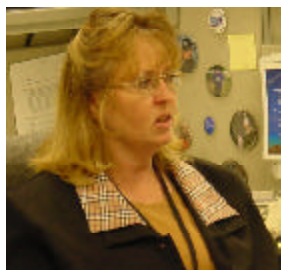
Catalano transformed a “bare-bones” security office into a comprehensive and proactive program through her superb technical and managerial expertise.

“The biggest responsibility is to protect our technology and to train personnel that threats can appear daily in the most innocuous places. We must be vigilant,” said Catalano.

One of the highlights of her tenure has been the creation of the Automated Public Release System (APRS). This restructuring of the directorate operational security document public release process in response to heightened concerns of protecting the nation’s technological superiority. Under Catalano’s leadership, a team created, tested and implemented a computer-automated process to support OPSEC peer reviews for all documents submitted for public release. Over 500 documents have been reviewed using this process since its implementation in February of 2002. AFRL/PA, ASC/PA and HQ AFMC have all expressed interest in this program, and this process was cited as a best practice in the unit compliance inspection.

Catalano leads a security team and a program that allows our scientists and engineers to complete their mission of providing state-of-the-art technology to the warfighter, while continuing to protect our nation’s security.

“Catalano’s outstanding leadership qualities and innovative approaches resulted in improvements across all areas of the security program in sensors,” stated deputy director Col. Jerry O’Connor. “We are delighted that her superior managerial skills and security expertise that epitomize the highest standards of the Air Force have been recognized.” @



Kathy Catalano